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ABSTRACT

In earlier research, Sedlacek and Brooks provided evidence for the validity of a measure of attitudes of whites towards blacks. In developing the Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) one of their major methodological points was that an appropriate measure of racial attitudes would provide a racial context to make difficult the psychological withdrawal from the measure. They criticized the conclusion of Rokeach and others that belief in an issue, not race, determines the attitude of one person toward another. One question remaining unanswered was whether the particular method employed in the SAS caused the results of whether the SAS really measured racial attitudes. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of beliefs rather than contextual situations on the attitudes of whites toward blacks. Results indicated that whites generally responded the same to a person holding a belief whether a black held the belief or not. The conclusion reached by Sedlacek and Brooks is that a nonracially related belief provides a way for subjects to ignore race in responding. Hence, there is further support for the necessity of providing a racial context before racial attitudes can be successfully measured. (Author/JM)

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CULTURAL STUDY CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
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The Measurement of Attitudes of Whites Toward Blacks with Certain Beliefs

William E. Sedlacek and Glenwood C. Brooks, Jr.

Research Report # 7-70

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Summary

In earlier research Sedlacek and Brooks provided evidence for the validity of a measure of attitudes of whites toward blacks. In developing the Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) one of their major methodological points was that an appropriate measure of racial attitudes would provide a racial context to make difficult the psychological withdrawal from the measure. They criticized the conclusion of Rokeach and others that belief in an issue, not race, determines the attitude of one person toward another. One question remaining unanswered was whether the particular method employed in the SAS caused the results or does the SAS really measure racial attitudes? The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of beliefs rather than contextual situations on the attitudes of whites toward blacks. Results indicated that whites generally responded the same to a person holding a belief whether a black held the belief or not. The conclusion reached by Sedlacek and Brooks, that a non-racially related belief provides a way for subjects to ignore race in responding, appears plausible. Hence there is further support for the necessity of providing a racial context before racial attitudes can be successfully measured.

There has been a great deal of difficulty in assessing the attitudes of one race toward another (Shaw and Wright, 1967; Sedlacek & Brooks, 1969).

Recently Sedlacek and Brooks (1969, 1970) and Brooks and Sedlacek (1970) have provided evidence for the validity of a measure of the attitudes of whites toward blacks. In developing the Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) one of their major methodological points was that an appropriate measure of racial attitudes would provide a racial context to make difficult the psychological withdrawal from the measure. The SAS provides personal and social situations designed to be relevant to black-white relations. The situations and instructions for the SAS are contained in the Appendix. Sedlacek and Brooks criticized the conclusions reached by Rokeach, Smith and Evans (1960); that belief in an issue, not race, determines the attitude of one person toward another. This conclusion was based on a technique whereby subjects (Ss) were given a choice in responding more positively to a person of a certain race or with certain beliefs. Sedlacek and Brooks argued that given the choice of a highly emotionally-bound alternative (race) and a more rational, ego-defendable choice (belief in an issue) Ss tend to run for psychological cover and choose the belief. Thus Sedlacek and Brooks felt that racial attitudes were not given a chance to be measured in Rokeach's model. Evidence that it appears socially unacceptable to verbalize or even to admit to oneself one's own prejudices has been provided by Schuman and Harding (1964), Zavallone and Cook (1965), Sedlacek and Brooks (1969) and Sigall and Page (1970).

One question remaining unanswered in the SAS is whether it is the particular method employed in measuring attitudes that caused the results, or does the SAS really measure racial attitudes?

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of beliefs rather than situations on the attitudes of whites toward blacks.

Procedure

Opinion Scale

The eight beliefs used by Rokeach, et al.(1960) in their original research were used. These eight beliefs were substituted for the situations presented in the SAS. The procedure was basically that employed in the original SAS study(Sedlacek and Brooks, 1969). For each belief, five bipolar Semantic Differential (Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1957) scales were written, making a total of 40 items. Table 1 shows the beliefs on each form and Tables 2 and 3 show the bipolar items. The scales represented general "good-bad" dimensions chosen to logically relate to each belief. The positive pole for each item was varied randomly to avoid response set. The resulting instrument was called the Opinion Scale (OS); a name chosen to appear as innocuous as possible. Two forms of the OS were printed (R1 and R2). Each contained the same beliefs, bipolar scales and instructions, except the word "black" was ascribed to each person in form R2. Ss responded to each bipolar item on a five point scale (0 to 4).

Administration

The OS was administered to 378 prospective University of Maryland students during the Summer Orientation Program required of all new entering freshmen. The OS was administered on two dates chosen randomly from all possible program dates during the summer. Two hundred and four of the students were in a group that appeared representative of freshmen entering the University. One hundred and seventy four students were honors students attending on a separate day.

Trained white graduate students administered the OS as part of a battery which contained vocational, attitudinal and activities inventories with no content similar to the OS. Questionnaires were passed out randomly with each S having an approximately equal chance of receiving either form. Ss had no knowledge that different forms existed. If Ss had questions, they were asked to come to the front of the room and not disturb others. Administration time was 10-15 minutes.

Data Analysis

Mean differences between Forms R1 and R2 were compared using two-tailed t tests at the .05 level. Analyses were done separately for honors and non-honors students. Principal components factor analyses using squared multiple correlations as communality estimates were conducted. All factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were then rotated to a varimax solution. Separate factor analyses were done on Forms R1 and R2 and R1 and R2 combined. The purpose of the factor analyses was to examine the configurations of responses and to compare these with the patterns in Sedlacek and Brooks (1969).

Results and Discussion

Tables 2 and 3 show the results of the t tests between Form R1 and R2, for honors and non-honors students. Table 4 shows the factor analysis for non-honors students with Forms R1 and R2 combined. Results of the factor analyses for R1 and R2 separately showed similar configurations.

Tables 2 and 3 indicate that eight of the 40 items in each table were significant beyond the .05 level. According to Sakoda, Cohen and Beall (1954) one would expect about five items to be significant by chance at the .05 level.

Thus there was little difference between the means other than would be expected by chance. The conclusion, then, is that whites generally respond the same to a person holding a belief whether a black person holds that belief or not. Since the same methodology was employed by Sedlacek and Brooks (1969, 1970) and Brooks and Sedlacek (1970) (with the same type of Ss) and they did get a differential reaction when the situation was relevant to race, it appears the racial context is important. The conclusion reached by Sedlacek and Brooks, that a non-racially related belief provides a way for Ss to ignore race in responding, appears plausible. This conclusion is further supported by an examination of the particular items that were significant in Tables 2 and 3. Nine of the sixteen items significant in both tables were associated with Belief II; a belief that there are fundamental differences between the races. This belief appears to provide the strongest racial context of any on the questionnaire. The mean for Form R2 (black reference) was significantly closer to the "negative" pole for items 6,7, 8 and 9 in Tables 2 and 3, and item 10 in Table 3.

Results of the factor analysis shown in Table 4 indicate that Ss responded to the beliefs independently of one another in that factor loadings tended to cluster around beliefs.

The general conclusion, then , from this study seems to be that Ss tend to respond independently to either Sedlacek and Brooks' situations or Rokeach's beliefs. However, the situations tend to result in a racial response from Ss and the beliefs do not. Hence the conclusion of Sedlacek and Brooks that racial attitudes should be measured in context appears to be supported.

Table 1.

Instructions and Beliefs on Two Forms of the Opinion Scale (OS)

Instructions

This questionnaire measures how people think and feel about a number of important social and personal questions. The questionnaire is anonymous, so DO NOT SIGN YOUR NAME.

People who hold certain beliefs are described in the questionnaire. Following each description of a person are five (5) descriptive word scales. Your task is to select for each descriptive scale, the rating which best describes your feelings toward the person.

Sample item: A person who likes classical music

Friendly | A | B | C | D | E | Unfriendly

You would indicate the direction and extent of your feelings (e.g., you might select B) by indicating your choice (B) on your response sheet by blackening in the appropriate space for that word scale.

While it may seem difficult to make judgments about a person without more information, respond as best you can to what is given. Respond as honestly as possible without puzzling over individual items. Respond with your first impression wherever possible.

BELIEFS

FORM R1	FORM R2
I. A person who is against socialized medicine.	I. A black person who is against socialized medicine.
II. A person who believes that there are fundamental differences between races.	II. A black person who believes that there are fundamental differences between races.
III. A person who believes that anyone should be allowed to own homes anywhere they want to.	III. A black person who believes that anyone should be allowed to own homes anywhere they want to.
IV. A person who believes each race should have its own fraternities and sororities.	IV. A black person who believes each race should have its own fraternities and sororities.
V. A person who is an atheist.	V. A black person who is an atheist.
VI. A person who is for immediate desegregation.	VI. A black person who is for immediate desegregation.
VII. A person who is pro-labor union.	VII. A black person who is pro-labor union .
VIII. A person who is a Communist.	VIII. A black person who is a Communist.

Table 2.

Means, Standard Deviations and t Values for 204 Regular University of Maryland Freshmen on Two Forms of the Opinion Scale (R1 N=105; R2 N=99)

Item	Mean R1 (Neutral)	S.D. Form R1	Mean R2 (Black)	S.D. Form R2	t
I - Socialized Medicine					
1. good-bad	2.19	1.07	2.29	1.03	.71
2. sympathetic-not sympathetic	2.05	1.12	2.42	1.06	2.46*
3. objectionable-acceptable	2.00	1.25	2.09	1.17	.53
4. desirable-undesirable	2.31	1.06	2.29	.98	.13
5. suspicious-trusting	1.82	1.03	1.74	1.07	.57
II- Differences between races					
6. relaxed-startled	1.43	1.27	2.24	1.17	4.72*
7. receptive-cautious	1.79	1.32	2.64	1.13	4.89*
8. glad-angered	2.04	1.03	2.69	1.08	4.37*
9. pleased-annoyed	2.21	1.07	2.72	1.13	3.31*
10. calm-anxious	1.85	1.19	2.17	1.19	1.94
III- Own homes anywhere					
11. safe-unsafe	.69	.92	.92	1.20	1.54
12. friendly-unfriendly	.89	1.05	.72	.98	1.19
13. nervous-calm	2.76	1.20	3.01	1.11	1.51
14. happy-sad	1.36	1.11	1.01	1.07	2.27*
15. angry-not angry	2.94	1.21	3.07	1.17	.76
IV- Own fraternities & sororities					
16. right-wrong	2.58	1.34	2.69	1.28	.55
17. disgusting-pleasing	1.75	.95	1.66	1.00	.71
18. cooperative-uncooperative	2.38	1.09	2.56	1.13	1.12
19. inferior-superior	1.95	.74	1.81	.91	1.25
20. acceptive-belligerant	2.25	1.04	2.33	1.11	.55
V- Atheist					
21. complimented-insulted	1.93	.85	2.03	1.04	.72
22. angered-overjoyed	1.90	.66	1.69	.94	1.84
23. secure-fearful	1.93	.93	2.05	1.15	.80
24. smarter-dumber	1.98	.72	2.03	.90	.43
25. bitter-pleasant	1.87	.90	1.83	1.14	.28
VI-For immediate desegregation					
26. warm-cold	1.66	1.37	1.66	1.35	.02
27. threatened-neutral	2.29	1.43	2.26	1.31	.15
28. understanding-indifferent	1.48	1.26	1.46	1.22	.09
29. favorable-unfavorable	1.61	1.27	1.64	1.35	.15
30. uncomfortable-comfortable	2.01	1.36	2.34	1.25	1.81

Table 2. continued

Means, Standard Deviations and t Values for 204 Regular University of Maryland Freshmen on Two Forms of the Opinion Scale (R1 N=105; R2 N=99)

Item	Mean R1 (Neutral)	S.D. Form R1	Mean R2 (Black)	S.D. Form R2	t
VII- Pro-labor union					
31. surprising-not surprising	2.37	1.42	2.40	1.35	.15
32. disinterested-interested	2.60	1.10	2.58	1.19	.17
33. close-distant	1.63	.94	1.76	.98	.93
34. concerned-unconcerned	1.68	1.14	1.33	1.17	2.13*
35. justified-unjustified	1.10	.97	1.31	.98	1.54
VIII-Communist					
36. hate-love	1.09	.88	1.40	.83	2.57*
37. indignant-understanding	1.36	1.06	1.62	1.07	1.72
38. tensed-calm	1.32	1.00	1.52	1.12	1.28
39. important-trivial	1.64	1.27	1.86	1.20	1.25
40. conspicuous-inconspicuous	1.51	1.10	1.61	1.18	.61

* Significant beyond .05

Table 3.

Means, Standard Deviations and t Values for 174 University of Maryland Honors Freshmen on Two Forms of the Opinion Scale (R1 N= 89; R2 N=85)

Item	Mean R1 (Neutral)	S.D. Form R1	Mean R2 (Black)	S.D. Form R2	t
I - Socialized Medicine					
1. good-bad	2.05	.93	2.08	.93	.26
2. sympathetic-not sympathetic	2.01	1.12	2.48	1.05	2.83*
3. objectionable-acceptable	2.33	1.20	2.20	1.25	.67
4. desirable-undesirable	1.84	.98	2.06	.93	1.49
5. suspicious-trusting	1.99	1.06	1.64	.97	2.27*
II-Differences between races					
6. relaxed-startled	1.64	1.10	2.25	1.25	3.38*
7. receptive-cautious	1.89	1.31	2.61	1.31	3.62*
8. glad-angered	2.04	.96	2.76	.85	5.17*
9. pleased-annoyed	2.20	.99	2.98	.90	5.36*
10. calm-anxious	1.81	1.25	2.34	1.20	2.84*
III- Own homes anywhere					
11. safe-unsafe	.62	.91	.67	.88	.39
12. friendly-unfriendly	.65	.83	.64	.90	.12
13. nervous-calm	2.98	1.17	3.07	1.09	.54
14. happy-sad	1.08	1.04	1.06	.94	.14
15. angry-not angry	3.00	1.24	3.00	1.22	.00
IV - Own fraternities & sororities					
16. right-wrong	2.79	1.23	2.96	1.10	1.00
17. disgusting-pleasing	1.76	.74	1.49	.99	2.08*
18. cooperative-uncooperative	2.42	.99	2.65	1.10	1.45
19. inferior-superior	1.94	.55	1.79	.77	1.53
20. acceptive-belligerant	2.21	1.12	2.45	1.12	1.37
V - Atheist					
21. complimented-insulted	2.03	.66	2.05	.95	.11
22. angered-overjoyed	1.98	.67	1.76	.95	1.70
23. secure-fearful	1.75	1.01	1.86	1.17	.64
24. smarter-dumber	1.91	.69	2.04	.79	1.11
25. bitter-pleasant	2.10	.95	1.94	1.07	1.03
VI -For immediate desegregation					
26. warm-cold	1.46	1.18	1.45	1.33	.07
27. threatened-neutral	2.65	1.33	2.56	1.42	.41
28. understanding-indifferent	1.30	1.37	1.22	1.30	.39
29. favorable-unfavorable	1.53	1.21	1.38	1.23	.81
30. uncomfortable-comfortable	2.35	1.21	2.46	1.37	.59

Table 3. continued

Means, Standard Deviations and t Values for 174 University of Maryland Honors Freshmen on Two Forms of the Opinion Scale (R1 N=89; R2 N=85)

Item	Mean R1 (Neutral)	S.D. Form R1	Mean R2 (Black)	S.D. Form R2	t
VII- Pro-labor union					
31. surprising-not surprising	2.57	1.25	2.73	1.13	.86
32. disinterested-interested	2.55	1.07	2.49	1.17	.33
33. close-distant	1.69	.91	1.65	.80	.29
34. concerned-unconcerned	1.71	1.14	1.52	1.22	1.06
35. justified-unjustified	1.08	.99	1.18	.97	.66
VIII-Communist					
36. hate-love	1.55	.80	1.59	.85	.30
37. indignant-understanding	1.83	1.14	1.86	1.16	.16
38. tensed-calm	1.62	1.15	1.80	1.23	1.00
39. important-trivial	1.56	1.11	1.70	1.14	.82
40. conspicuous-inconspicuous	1.53	1.09	1.60	1.04	.41

* Significant beyond .05

Table 4.

Rotated Factor Loadings for Forms R1 and R2 Combined of the Opinion Scale* (N=378)

Item	Factor I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	Communality
1	-.12	.04	-.10	.12	-.01	**.65**	.07	.46
2	-.01	-.18	.08	.03	-.01	**.57**	-.02	.39
3	-.01	-.01	-.08	-.03	-.01	**-.48**	.15	.31
4	.00	.03	-.02	.14	.00	**.62**	-.12	.41
5	.13	.19	-.07	.00	.13	**-.54**	.12	.41
6	-.10	**-.64**	.00	.12	.01	-.05	-.04	.49
7	.08	**-.72**	-.02	.02	-.10	.09	-.01	.55
8	.07	**-.70**	-.07	.14	.01	.03	-.04	-.80
9	-.02	**-.84**	-.04	.11	.02	.01	-.06	.75
10	.22	**-.65**	-.01	.16	.00	.09	-.06	.57
11	**.59**	-.04	.04	-.08	-.13	.03	-.13	.46
12	**.70**	.01	.00	-.03	-.11	-.10	.01	.54
13	**-.59**	.07	-.02	-.04	.09	.08	-.11	.42
14	**.69**	.02	-.01	-.03	-.09	-.07	-.04	.54
15	**-.65**	.03	.01	.07	.20	.00	.02	.53
16	**-.25**	-.04	-.07	**.72**	.16	-.07	-.05	.66
17	.07	.08	.01	**-.82**	-.06	-.08	-.09	.70
18	-.10	-.20	-.09	**.72**	.06	.07	-.01	.58
19	-.04	.02	-.07	**-.57**	-.00	-.06	.02	.41
20	.01	-.15	-.01	**.69**	-.04	.16	.02	.61
21	-.06	-.04	.05	.04	-.08	.01	**-.73**	.54
22	.09	.20	-.10	-.02	.08	-.09	**.63**	.49
23	-.01	-.09	.19	.09	-.09	.05	**-.61**	.47
24	.05	-.20	.05	-.04	.05	.10	-.09	.27
25	-.05	.04	-.08	.11	.19	-.24	**.42**	.43
26	.08	-.01	-.08	-.09	**-.80**	.03	-.05	.70
27	-.19	.08	-.10	.07	**.64**	-.10	-.01	.56
28	.09	.06	-.01	-.04	**-.78**	.09	-.02	.63
29	.11	.06	.05	-.03	**-.76**	-.04	-.12	.63
30	-.20	.01	-.01	-.02	**.71**	.04	.09	.57
31	-.29	.06	.05	.11	.02	.03	-.03	.29
32	-.33	-.16	**.46**	.05	.09	-.08	-.05	.49
33	.34	-.03	**-.42**	.03	-.04	.08	-.08	.43
34	.09	.21	**-.35**	.03	-.08	.10	.05	.38
35	.42	-.07	-.32	.06	-.01	.04	.15	.41
36	-.14	-.15	**-.52**	.03	.27	-.30	.05	.57
37	-.07	-.07	**-.66**	-.04	.22	-.12	.24	.63
38	-.12	-.03	**-.57**	-.02	.13	-.10	.24	.50
39	.03	-.06	-.23	.03	-.11	-.05	.09	.22
40	-.07	-.02	-.18	.10	-.14	-.12	**.37**	.33
Eigenvalue	2.92	2.91	1.86	2.71	3.12	2.00	1.91	
% of Common Variance	14.57	14.53	9.28	13.52	15.57	9.78	9.48	

* Five largest loadings on each factor are underlined

APPENDIX

Instructions and Situations from the Situational Attitude Scale*

INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire measures how poeple think and feel about a number of social and personal incidents and situations. It is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire is anonymous so please DO NOT SIGN YOUR NAME.

Each item or situation is followed by 10 descriptive word scales. Your task is to select, for each descriptive scale, the rating which best describes YOUR feelings towards the item.

Sample item: Going out on a date

happy ' A ' B ' C ' D ' E ' sad

You would indicate the direction and extent of your feelings (e.g., you might select B) by indicating your choice (B) on your response sheet by blackening in the appropriate space for that word scale. DO NOT MARK ON THE BOOKLET. PLEASE RESPOND TO ALL WORD SCALES.

Sometimes you may feel as though you had the same item before on the questionnaire. This will not be the case, so DO NOT LOOK BACK AND FORTH through the items. Do not try to remember how you checked similar items earlier in the questionnaire. MAKE EACH ITEM A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT. Respond as honestly as possible without puzzling over individual items. Respond with your first impressions whenever possible.

SITUATIONS

	FORM A	FORM B
I.	A new family moves in next door to you.	A new black family moves in next door to you.
II.	You read in the paper that a man has raped a woman.	You read in the paper that a black man has raped a white woman.
III.	It is evening and a man appears at your door saying he is selling magazines.	It is evening and a black man appears at your door saying he is selling magazines.
IV.	You are walking down the street alone and must pass a corner where a group of five young men are loitering.	You are walking down the street alone and must pass a corner where a group of five young black men are loitering.
V.	Your best friend has just become engaged.	Your best friend has just become engaged to a black person.
VI.	You are stopped for speeding by a policeman.	You are stopped for speeding by a black policeman.
VII.	A new person joins your social group.	A new black person joins your social group.
VIII.	You see a youngster steal something in a dimestore.	You see a black youngster steal something in a dimestore.
IX.	Some students on campus stage a demonstration.	Some black students on campus stage a demonstration.
X.	You get on a bus and you are the only person who has to stand.	You get on a bus that has all black people aboard and you are the only person who has to stand.

*The Situational Attitude Scale is copyrighted and available from the authors on request.

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